



FACT SHEET

BLM-MONTANA/DAKOTAS

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Miles City Resource Management Plan (RMP) Revision

FACT SHEET: Overview of the Planning Process

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What is a Resource Management Plan?

A resource management plan (RMP) and associated Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) provides a landscape-level framework for managing Bureau of Land Management (BLM)-administered lands and federal minerals. Currently, lands within the Miles City Field Office are managed according to the Big Dry (1996) and Powder River (1985) RMPs, as amended.

Where is the Planning Area?

The Miles City RMP and associated EIS will guide management for approximately 2.8 million acres of BLM-managed surface and about 11 million acres of federal mineral estate managed by the BLM within the following counties: Carter, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Garfield, McCone, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Treasure, Wibaux, and portions of Big Horn and Valley.

Where We've Been . . .

After many years of hard work by BLM staff, Cooperating Agencies, the Resource Advisory Council, and other engaged parties, the Miles City Draft RMP/EIS is ready for your review and comment. This Draft reflects a great deal of planning and analysis, as well as a significant investment of time from our cooperators and resource advisory council members who participated in the process. Described below are some of the important milestones in the planning process that helped us get to this point.

Scoping

On February 4, 2005, the BLM MCFO initiated scoping for the RMP revision. A series of public scoping meetings were held across the planning area to obtain public input. The BLM reviewed comments and compiled a scoping report. Comments and information gathered from scoping were used in drafting the RMP revision.

In 2010 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act, but that listing the species was precluded by the need to address other species first. One reason for the USFWS determination was the need for "improved regulatory mechanisms" to ensure species conservation. The principal regulatory mechanisms for the BLM are resource decisions in land management plans. The BLM has joined forces at the national level to develop coordinated long-term conservation measures and actions for the Greater Sage-Grouse in land management plans. This draft plan addresses a range of alternatives to address Greater Sage-Grouse conservation on BLM-administered surface and mineral estate within the planning area.

Analysis of the Management Situation

In 2005, the BLM began to prepare the analysis of the management situation (AMS), which describes the current conditions and trends of the resources, uses, and social and economic conditions in the planning area. The main purpose of the AMS is to identify what needs to be improved by looking at the conditions and uses of the resources as well as the laws, regulations and policies under which the BLM manages those resources and uses. The AMS, along with public scoping comments, was used by BLM specialists and cooperators to help formulate alternatives and was the main body of material incorporated into Chapter 3 of the Draft RMP.

**The scoping report, AMS and other documents can be found at:
http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/fo/miles_city_field_office/rmp.html**

Alternative Formulation

In the context of an RMP, alternatives are different management options that the BLM may choose to manage lands in the planning area. One management option (alternative) emphasizes resource protection while another alternative emphasizes resource production. The resource protection alternative would favor non-consumptive or non-degrading uses. The resource production alternative would favor consumptive uses, such as increased production of mineral resources.

The BLM studied the AMS and public comments and met with cooperating agencies and resource advisory council members to determine how best to craft alternatives to address the issues, respond to the management opportunities and to change resource conditions where appropriate. The completed alternatives were then analyzed for impacts and a preferred alternative (E) was identified. The preferred alternative seeks to balance resource protection with resource production in consideration of the economic reliance of local communities on public lands and the way of life provided by public lands.

Where we are now . . .

A notice of availability announcing the release of the draft RMP/EIS will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 8, 2013, initiating the 90-day public comment period. To be considered for preparation of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS, comments must be marked received by **June 5, 2013**. You may request a compact disk of the Draft RMP by contacting the Miles City Field Office at (406) 233-2800 or at the following email address: BLM_MT_MCFO_RMP@blm.gov.

Where We Are Going Next . . .

The public comment period is a very important part of the planning process. The comments and information you provide will be considered in making changes to the Draft RMP. These changes will result in a proposed plan, which will be made available in the Proposed RMP/Final EIS. The proposed plan will be made available for review and protest before an approved plan is issued with a record of decision.

We will continue to provide updates on the status of our planning process through our website and newsletters. Thanks for your participation, and we encourage you to remain involved throughout the RMP revision process.